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Special Issue - Pontifical Mission Societies support younger Churches, formation of seminarians and priests, poor children, and missionary activities for entire People of God

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – Collections taken up for World Mission Sunday, gifts from individual benefactors, and contributions that come in thanks to various missionary projects, are all sent first to the respective National Offices of the Pontifical Mission Societies in each country, to be put in a common fund, the Universal Solidarity Fund. During the Annual General Assembly of the Pontifical Missionary Societies, normally held during the month of May, presided by the Archbishop President and the Secretary Generals of the four Societies, the members of the Assembly discuss hundreds of requests from all over the world for funding for building churches, chapels and local centers for apostolate, for aid and formation of seminarians and catechists, for educational projects and activities for children, etc.. The Assembly, taking into account the available economic resources and criteria of equality and justice, decides on the distribution of the funding. Unfortunately, the Universal Solidarity Fund is never large enough to be able to respond positively to all the petitions for aid.

The Pontifical Mission Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith receives thousands of requests for aid from all across the missionary world, mainly concerning the formation of catechists, the construction and maintenance of churches, chapels, and convents, diocesan activities, aid for pastoral activity of religious congregations, etc. The 2010 General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies, in examining the petitions received, has made the following distribution of subsidies:
AFRICA - ordinary subsidies $17,236,000; catechists $7,169,900; media (SIGNIS) $859,500; special subsidies $24,228,000
AMERICA - ordinary subsidies $2,020,000; catechists $659,000; media (SIGNIS) $195,000; special subsidies $1,032,400
ASIA - ordinary subsidies $10,774,500; catechists $4,071,800; media (SIGNIS) $732,000; special subsidies $10,182,900
EUROPE - ordinary subsidies $1,184,200; catechists $16,000; special subsidies $143,000 OCEANIA - ordinary subsidies $1,478,000; catechists $406,000; media (SIGNIS) $334,000; special subsidies $595,500

The St. Peter the Apostle Pontifical Mission Society

The Pontifical Mission Society St. Peter the Apostle funded a total of 837 seminaries: 461 minor seminaries and 376 major seminaries, some of which depend on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and others which do not.
The total number of seminarians supported by the Society is 77,715:
51,592 minor seminarians and 26,123 major seminarians.
The Society, by considering applications received, has granted subsidies as follows: to minor seminaries: $6,427,490; to major seminaries and preparatory seminaries: $15,913,601. For extraordinary assistance, it has allocated $6,504,005.98. The Society has also awarded $836,760 to male novices, and $1,432,990 to female novices who are in mission territories.

The Holy Childhood Pontifical Mission Society

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The Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood, or the Holy Childhood Association, focuses on the role of “little ones” in announcing the Kingdom. The requests for funding regard programmes for religious instruction, food and medical assistance, clothing and school material, installation of classrooms for catechetical purposes and centers for children, acquiring medicines, support for poor children, etc. The General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies, after examining the petitions received, made the following distribution of funds, from a total of $18,015,600.70 ($3,696,000 in ordinary subsidies and $14,206,100 in special subsidies), distributed by continent as follows: Africa $10,782,300; America $933,100; Asia $5,820,800; Europe $118,900; Oceania $247,000.
In addition to these: $113,500.70 in subsidies for National Directors' Offices.
As for approved projects: 462 projects for child pastoral care, 45 projects for missionary animation and formation, 96 projects for pre-school education, 989 projects for school education, 254 projects for Catholic Religious Instruction, 779 projects for Pro-Life.

The Pontifical Missionary Union

Paul VI defined the Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) as «the soul of the other Mission Aid Societies.» The PMU strives: 1. To promote missionary consciousness among seminarians, priests and religious. 2. To animate all animators of the People of God for the Mission (RM 84) by spreading and promoting the other PMS. 3. To foster Christian unity so that «they may be so perfected in unity that the world will recognise that it was you who sent me...» (Jn 17:23). 4. To put all the Church «in a state of mission». (SL) (Agenzia Fides 21/10/2010)

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